

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSM-05
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PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
OMB-01 ACDA-10 IGA-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 /118 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. BROWN (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

NEA/EGY - MR NEWBERRY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JANUARY 27

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JANUARY 27,
1977:

Q. AN EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPER TODAY, CALLING THE SECRETARY'S
TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST A WASTE OF TIME, AND LEAVING THAT
ASIDE FOR A MOMENT, CHARACTERIZES IT AS BASICALLY A
FACT-FINDING TRIP, ELICITING THE VIEWS OF ARAB LEADERS AND
VIEWS THAT THIS NEWSPAPER, THE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE, SAYS
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ARE VERY WELL KNOWN TO THE UNITED STATES, TO BEGIN WITH.

FIRST OF ALL, ARE THEY CORRECT THAT BASICALLY THIS IS A
FACT-FINDING TRIP? AND IF THAT IS ALL IT IS, AND NOT A
NEGOTIATING TRIP, COULD YOU EXPAND A BIT ON WHAT THE
REAL PURPOSE OF IT IS, AND WHETHER THEY ARE RIGHT, THAT,
AS THEY PUT IT, WE ARE BACK TO SQUARE ONE AGAIN?

A. I DO NOT ACCEPT THE LAST STATEMENT, BUT I THINK I
WOULD JUST STAND BY THE DESCRIPTION WHICH THE ANNOUNCEMENT
FROM THE WHITE HOUSE USED THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, WITH
REGARD TO THE PURPOSE OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP. HE IS

GOING TO TALK TO LEADERS OF THESE COUNTRIES AND GAIN A
FIRST-HAND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS.

NOW, THIS IS MR. VANCE'S FIRST TRIP OF THIS TYPE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST, AND IT IS FACT-FINDING. IT IS GETTING TO
KNOW THE LEADERS OF THESE COUNTRIES, TO BRING BACK TO

PRESIDENT CARTER A CLEAR, FIRST-HAND IMPRESSION OF WHERE WE SHOULD GO NEXT IN THAT AREA.

SO, I AM AFRAID I CAN'T ACCEPT THE PREMISE THAT IT IS WITHOUT VALUE.

Q. WELL, APPARENTLY YOU DON'T ACCEPT THE JUDGMENT THAT IT IS A WASTE OF TIME.

A. I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON WHAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESS IS SAYING ABOUT IT. I AM JUST STATING IN A POSITIVE CONTEXT THE OBJECTIVE OF SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. LET'S LEAVE THEIR COMMENT ASIDE. YOU GAVE AT LEAST THREE PURPOSES OF THE TRIP BUT NONE OF THEM EVEN BEARS ON NEGOTIATIONS. IS THIS A NEGOTIATING TRIP, OR IS IT A UNCLASSIFIED

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FACT-FINDING TRIP?

A. IT IS AN EXCHANGE OF VIEW AND FACT-FINDING TRIP.

Q. IT IS NOT A NEGOTIATING TRIP.

A. IT IS NOT GOING TO BE A SHUTTLE IN THE SENSE THAT HAS BEEN USED IN THE PAST, OBVIOUSLY, AS HE IS GOING TO SIX COUNTRIES IN FIVE DAYS. IT IS ESSENTIALLY GETTING TO KNOW THE LEADERS OF THESE COUNTRIES AND GAIN A FIRST-HAND UNDERSTANDING -- AND I STRESS "FIRST-HAND" BECAUSE THIS IS THE SECRETARY'S INITIAL SWING THROUGH THAT PART OF THE WORLD.

Q. AN ISRAELI NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCED THAT MR. RABIN WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON THE 3RD OF MARCH. CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT?

A. I THINK ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THAT SORT WOULD COME FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.

Q. WE ARE ALL AWARE OF SECRETARY VANCE'S STATEMENTS BEFORE HE WAS SWORN IN THAT HE WOULD BE DOING LITTLE FLYING AROUND, AND HIS DIRECTION NOW SEEMS TO BE TO APPOINT SPECIAL NEGOTIATORS FOR EACH OF THE PROBLEM AREAS.

I DON'T KNOW IF WE HAVE DEALT WITH THIS QUESTION BEFORE. WHAT HAS CHANGED BETWEEN THE TIME VANCE SAID THAT HE WASN'T GOING TO BE FLYING AROUND AND NOW THAT WOULD COMPEL HIM TO GO TO THE MIDDLE EAST SO QUICKLY?

A. I THINK IT IS A LITTLE EARLY TO MAKE ANY KIND OF

GENERALIZED STATEMENT ABOUT TRAVEL POLICY FOR THE NEW SECRETARY. HE HAS BEEN IN HIS OFFICE -- THIS IS THE FOURTH DAY NOW -- AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO MAKE A GUESS OR A JUDGMENT AS TO WHAT FACTORS WENT INTO THE DECISION TO TRAVEL TO THE MIDDLE EAST NOW, EXCEPT THE OBVIOUS ONE:
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NAMELY IT IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS, AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT BOTH SECRETARY VANCE AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. CONSEQUENTLY, THE TRIP MAKES SENSE, I BELIEVE.

Q. WELL, SECRETARY VANCE IS CLEAR ABOUT HIS OWN VIEWS ON TRAVEL, AND THEY WERE THAT HE WASN'T GOING TO DO VERY MUCH OF IT.

A. I DO NOT BELIEVE HE EVER SAID THAT.

Q. THEN THE QUESTION IS, WAS HE RELUCTANT ABOUT GOING TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND WAS THIS SOMETHING THAT HE HAD TO BE TALKED INTO?

A. I AM SURE HE IS NOT RELUCTANT ABOUT GOING TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS IS A VERY POSITIVE AND USEFUL TRIP, FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. I JUST REALLY WOULD NOT WANT TO CHARACTERIZE IT ANY FURTHER, OR MAKE ANY OTHER KIND OF JUDGMENTS ON THE TRIP.

Q. THERE WERE SEVERAL STORIES YESTERDAY, I THINK EMANATING FROM THE PENTAGON THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAD GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD TO THOSE PENDING SALES TO ISRAEL. IT WAS UNCLEAR TO ME YESTERDAY WHETHER IN FACT THIS HAD BEEN DONE, OR WHETHER THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAD SIMPLY APPROVED IT AND PAPER WORK WAS PROCEEDING WITHOUT ANYBODY SAYING DON'T GO AHEAD. DO YOU HAVE ANY CLARIFICATION ON THIS?

A. AS YOU KNOW, THE COMMITMENT ON THESE ITEMS THAT HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO WAS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. IN LINE WITH THAT COMMITMENT, THE TECHNICAL PROCESS IS UNDERWAY THROUGH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, AS YOU KNOW, ON THE LETTERS OF OFFER NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TRANSACTION.

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NOW, THE PROCESS IS NOT CONCLUDED, AND AS PART OF THE PROCESS WE WILL ALSO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE CONGRESS. I THINK UNTIL THIS PROCESS OF CONSULTATION IS CONCLUDED, WE CANNOT OFFER MUCH MORE ON THE SUBJECT.

Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION, THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, HAS NOT YET MADE THE POLITICAL DECISION INVOLVED ON WHETHER TO GO AHEAD WITH THIS OR NOT?

A. I HAVE DESCRIBED TO YOU THE STATE OF THE TRANSACTION. I THINK YOU SHOULD NOT INTERPRET MY ANSWER TO MEAN THAT A DECISION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN TO GO FORWARD WITH THE COMMITMENT. AS I SAID AT THE BEGINNING, THERE HAS BEEN A COMMITMENT MADE BY THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION, AND THE TECHNICAL PROCESS IN LINE WITH THAT COMMITMENT IS UNDERWAY.

Q. YES, BUT HAS THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MADE THE DECISION, IS WHAT I AM ASKING, AND YOU JUST SAY, DON'T ASSUME THAT IT HASN'T, BUT HAS IT?

A. I AM SAYING THE COMMITMENT WAS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION AND THE TECHNICAL PROCESS IS NOW UNDERWAY TO MAKE GOOD ON THAT COMMITMENT.

Q. THAT LEAVES THE QUESTION UNANSWERED.

A. NO, IT DOES NOT.

Q. YOU ARE SAYING, IN OTHER WORDS, NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE NOT TO GO AHEAD WITH IT.

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

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Q. WELL, HOWEVER, YOU HAVE MADE THE DECISION THAT IN THESE CASES, EVEN WHERE A STATUTORY WOULDN'T BE NECESSARY, YOU ARE GOING TO ASK CONGRESS?

A. THERE IS GOING TO BE CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS.

Q. EVEN THOUGH THE INDIVIDUAL SECTIONS DON'T COME UP TO DOLS 25 MILLION.

A. GIVEN THE KNOWN INTEREST IN THIS PARTICULAR TRANSACTION WE WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS.

Q. NOW, ARE YOU JUST GOING TO GO UP AND TALK TO THEM

ABOUT IT IN THE LOBBY, OR ARE YOU GOING TO GO -- ?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT FORM THE CONSULTATIONS WILL TAKE, BUT I AM ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, CONGRESS WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE NO ON THIS.

A. IT IS A QUESTION OF CONSULTATION. I THINK WHEN THIS SUBJECT AROSE DURING THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION, AT THAT TIME WE MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATION UNDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WITH THE CONGRESS ON THESE PARTICULAR SALES BECAUSE OF THEIR NATURE.

Q. COULD YOU BE A LITTLE MORE PRECISE ABOUT THE PROCESS UNDERWAY ON THE LETTERS OF OFFER THAT YOU REFERRED TO? IS IT THE CASE THAT THE VARIOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS, AT LEAST ONE OF WHICH INCLUDES STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY, ARE GOING TOGETHER ALL AT ONCE, OR IS SOME SYSTEM LIKELY TO BE SUPPLIED MORE QUICKLY THAN OTHERS?

A. THIS IS A RATHER TECHNICAL MATTER THAT IS WITHIN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PURVIEW OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AS TO HOW INDIVIDUAL ITEMS ARE BROKEN DOWN BY LETTER OF OFFER. I DO NOT KNOW HOW THE INDIVIDUAL ITEMS ARE GOING TO BE ASSEMBLED AND PRESENTED.

Q. THERE WAS A PRECISE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CLUSTER BOMB, WHICH IS AN INVENTORY ITEM, AND THE FLIR WHICH IS NOT.

A. THERE ARE TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES. ONE IS THE DEFENSE ARTICLES, AND THE OTHER IS THE MAJOR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT -- WHICH IS ALSO KNOWN AS MAJOR COMBAT EQUIPMENT. THOSE ARE THE TWO CATEGORIES, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, UNDER SECTION 36(B) OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT; AND IN THAT SECTION THERE IS A REQUIREMENT THAT CONGRESS BE NOTIFIED OF ANY LETTER OF OFFER TO SELL DEFENSE ARTICLES.

REGARDING THE TWO CATEGORIES -- 25 MILLION DOLLARS OR MORE FOR DEFENSE ARTICLES, AND SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS OR MORE ON DEFENSE EQUIPMENT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE --

A. HOW IT IS BROKEN DOWN -- THE ITEMS THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT ON THIS SPECIFIC SALE -- I CANNOT TELL YOU. I THINK

DOD IS PROBABLY YOUR BEST SOURCE ON THAT.

Q. YOU USED THE WORD "COMMITMENT" OF THE PRIOR ADMINISTRATION IN DESCRIBING THIS VIEW. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT FEEL THAT THE DECISION BY PRESIDENT FORD ABOUT THESE SALES REPRESENTS SOMETHING OF A BINDING COMMITMENT WHICH COMES OVER TO THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION?

A. I THINK I WILL JUST STICK WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID. A COMMITMENT WAS MADE ON THESE ITEMS BY THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. I THINK THAT REALLY SPEAKS FOR ITSELF, UNCLASSIFIED

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DOES IT NOT?

Q. YOU SUGGEST THAT THIS COMMITMENT IS SOMETHING THAT GOES ON IN TIME BY YOUR USE OF THAT WORD.

A. WE HAVE MANY COMMITMENTS IN THE REALM OF FOREIGN POLICY THAT CONTINUE OVER ADMINISTRATIONS, AS YOU KNOW.

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THIS COMMITMENT COULD BE ABORTED BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION? IS THAT UNDER CONSIDERATION?

A. I HAVE NO IDEA OF WHAT'S UNDER CONSIDERATION. I JUST WILL STICK WITH WHAT I SAY. I AM NOT GOING TO SPECULATE ON ANY POSSIBLE FUTURE --

Q. CAN I ASK ONE MORE QUESTION ON THIS ONE MATTER? PRESIDENT CARTER, IN HIS FIRST INTERVIEW GIVEN TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND UNITED PRESS, SAID THAT WHEN MR. VANCE GOES TO THE MIDDLE EAST NEXT MONTH HE IS GOING TO TALK WITH MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES WITH A VIEW TOWARD HAVING THEM MODERATE THEIR PURCHASES OF WEAPONS TO AVOID THE CONTINUING ARMS BUILDUP IN THAT AREA. IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF MR. VANCE TALKING WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET THEM, AMONG OTHERS, TO MODERATE THEIR PURCHASES BY AGREEING NOT TO BUY THESE WEAPONS THAT WE HAVE NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION?

A. I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE SECRETARY WILL BE DISCUSSING WITH ANY OF THE COUNTRIES THAT HE IS GOING TO BE VISITING; AND I WOULD REALLY STEER AWAY FROM ANY KIND OF SPECULATION ON THE NATURE OF HIS TALKS.

Q. IN TALKING ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST, YOU'VE MADE -- PUT A LOT OF STRESS ON THE PERSONAL VIEWS OF THE LEADERS IN THE AREA; AND RELATED TO JOHN MC LEAN'S QUESTIONS HERE, THERE HAVE BEEN ANALYSES -- ONE PARTICULARLY BY THE NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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YORK TIMES THE OTHER DAY -- THAT THE ECONOMIC TROUBLES
EGYPT IS NOW HAVING WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR SADAT TO

ASSUME THE LEADERSHIP ROLE HE HAS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. I
WONDER IF YOU COULD GIVE US YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THAT --
WHETHER YOU THINK THIS IS A TIMELY OCCASION TO COUNSEL WITH
MR. SADAT, AND WHETHER YOU THINK HE IS AS POWERFULLY IN
THE LEADERSHIP ROLE AS HE HAS BEEN IN THE LAST COUPLE OF
YEARS REGARDING MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY.

A. WE BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT SADAT CONTINUES TO PLAY A
KEY ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. WELL, I WISH YOU WOULD, INSTEAD OF SPEAKING OF "A KEY
ROLE," TELL US WHETHER YOU THINK HE CONTINUES TO PLAY
THE (UNDERLINED) KEY ROLE THAT HE PLAYED IN THE LAST
COUPLE OF YEARS. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY DOUBT ABOUT
THAT.

A. I CANNOT GET INTO A REFINEMENT OF THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN "THE KEY ROLE" AND "A KEY ROLE," BUT WE HAVE THE
IMPRESSION THAT HIS POLICIES OF MODERATION AT HOME AND
ABROAD HAVE THE BASIC SUPPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, AND
CERTAINLY WE CONTINUE TO VIEW HIS ROLE AS A VERY IMPORTANT
ONE.

Q. WELL, WAIT A MINUTE NOW. I DIDN'T GET THAT. MODERA-
TION ABROAD, AND WHAT IS THE OTHER ELEMENT OF HIS POLICY
THAT YOU REFERRED TO? MODERATION ABROAD AND --

A. I SAID MODERATION AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Q. AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A. AND WE CONTINUE TO VIEW HIM AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR
AND LEADER IN THE AREA.

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Q. WELL, WHAT IF SOME SKEPTIC CAME ALONG AND SUGGESTED
THAT MAYBE THE TIMING OF THE TRIP, ON THE ONE HAND, IS
GEARED TO HELPING SADAT AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, HELPING
MR. RABIN JUST BEFORE HIS PARTY HOLDS THEIR NATIONAL
CONFERENCE? HOW WOULD YOU DEAL WITH THE SUGGESTION
THAT THAT IS WHY MR. VANCE HAS CHOSEN THIS PERIOD TO

DEPART FROM WHAT JOHN MC LEAN, QUITE RIGHTLY, SPEAKS
OF -- A DISINCLINATION TO TRAVEL?

A. I WOULD REJECT THE NOTION. I WAS ASKED THAT QUESTION
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT TO ISRAEL, AND I WOULD
CERTAINLY REJECT IT IN CONNECTION WITH A VISIT TO EGYPT.
I KNOW THAT SECRETARY VANCE LOOKS FORWARD VERY MUCH TO
CONFERRING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT DURING THIS TRIP, AND I

WOULD REJECT THE NOTION THAT IT IS IN ANY WAY CONNECTED
AS YOU SUGGESTED.

Q. BUT DO YOU THINK PRESIDENT SADAT'S MARGIN OF
MANEUVER IS REDUCED OR NOT?

A. I THINK I JUST ADDRESSED THAT.

Q. WELL, I'M NOT SURE YOU DID. I MEAN I'M NOT SURE I
UNDERSTOOD. YOU SAID "A KEY ROLE." YOU KNOW, EITHER THIS
(IN AUDIBLE) REDUCES HIS MARGIN OR NOT -- WHATEVER THE KEY
ROLE IS.

A. I JUST SAID THAT WE CONSIDER THAT HIS POLICIES HAVE
THE BASIC SUPPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE
ADMIRATION OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

Q. SO IT'S NOT REDUCED?

A. I AM JUST GOING TO STICK WITH WHAT I SAID ON THIS
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POINT.

Q. A BEIRUT NEWSPAPER SAYS THIS MORNING THAT THE U.S.
EMBASSY IN BEIRUT ADVISED THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT NOT TO
SEND ARAB DETERRENT FORCES TO THE SOUTH AT THE PRESENT
TIME -- "BECAUSE THIS WOULD PROVOKE A REACTION FROM THE
ENEMY" -- PRESUMABLY MEANING ISRAEL -- "AND PROVIDE HIM"--
THE ENEMY -- "WITH AN EXCUSE TO ENTER LEBANESE TERRITORY."

IS THAT AN ACCURATE REPORT OF WHAT THE U.S. WAS TRANS-
MITTING TO LEBANON?

A. I WOULD GO BACK TO WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY -- NAMELY,
THAT WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON AND ARE IN CONTACT WITH AND CONTINUE TO URGE ALL
SIDES TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. I AM NOT GOING TO
CHARACTERIZE THE NATURE OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS OR REALLY
SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THEM. SO I AM NOT ACCEPTING THE
PREMISE OF THIS REPORT.

Q. ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS SALES TO THE MIDDLE EAST -- AND GOING BACK TO DON OBERDORFER'S QUESTION -- WOULD THIS

ADMINISTRATION CONSIDER A UNILATERAL POLICY -- A POLICY OF UNILATERALLY REDUCING AMERICAN ARMS SALES TO COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- OR, DOES THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUE TO THINK ABOUT THIS PROBLEM WITHIN A LARGER CONTEXT INVOLVING SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS INTO THE AREA AS WELL?

A. I AM SORRY I CANNOT ADDRESS A LARGE POLICY QUESTION SUCH AS THAT FROM THIS FORUM.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE THE QUESTION AND SEE?

A. I DO NOT THINK I AM GOING TO GET YOU A GOOD ANSWER ON THAT. THAT REALLY TRANSCENDS THE SCOPE OF --
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Q. WELL, THE PRESIDENT DID ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THAT GENERAL ISSUE AND IT DOES RAISE THAT QUESTION.

A. I REALLY THINK THAT IS AN ISSUE OF SUCH DIMENSION THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU A GOOD ANSWER ON IT. I REALLY THINK THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD BE ASKED ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

Q. WELL, MAYBE THIS IS NARROW ENOUGH: MR. VANCE AT HIS HEARING SAID THAT HE HAS AN OPEN MIND ABOUT ARMS FOR EGYPT. AND, FOLLOWING THAT, THERE WAS THE CARTER INTERVIEW -- WHICH, YOU KNOW SPEAKS OF A HOLD-DOWN IN ARMS. DOES MR. VANCE STILL HAVE AN OPEN MIND ABOUT ARMS FOR EGYPT, OR HAS HIS MIND BEEN CLOSED BY THE PRESIDENT?

A. HE HAS SAID HE HAS AN OPEN MIND, AND I CERTAINLY WOULD NOT WISH TO COMMENT IN ANY WAY WITH REGARD TO WHAT HE HAS IN HIS MIND ON THIS SUBJECT.

Q. WELL, HOW ABOUT -- YOU APPARENTLY DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT OPEN MINDS AND CLOSED MINDS. IS THE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE ARMS DEALS WITH EGYPT STILL OPEN AS MR. VANCE PREPARES TO GO TO THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I REALLY CANNOT ELABORATE ON WHAT THE SECRETARY HAS SAID. HE SAID HE HAS AN OPEN MIND ON THE SUBJECT; AND I AM JUST NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND THAT.

Q. WELL, HIS BOSS HAS SPOKEN SINCE -- SO IT WOULDN'T BE UNTOWARD IF HE CHANGED HIS MIND.

A. I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CHANGE OF MIND, EITHER
OPEN OR CLOSED, WITH REGARD TO THIS SUBJECT.
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To: AMMAN BEIRUT MULTIPLE
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